

The
Alcester Grammar



School Record

December, 1940.

Alcester Grammar School Record.

No. 67.

DECEMBER, 1940.

EDITOR—MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE—

M. AUSTIN, J. BRIDGMAN, J. PLESTERS, STEWART.

Editorial.

The appearance of the *Record* at its usual time this term shows that A.G.S. is still carrying on. A glance at the list of names on the next page will further show that there has been an unusually large entry of new pupils since July and that our numbers have once more reached a new high level. We have among us many pupils who have, through stress of war, come into the neighbourhood from various parts of the country; they are to be found distributed in all the forms, some of which have become somewhat large.

Work is, as far as possible, proceeding upon normal lines. Considerable inconvenience, however, has been experienced through the length of time taken by text books to reach us, and certain books ordered at the beginning of term have still not arrived. We are also strictly rationed as regards stationery, so that adjustments have had to be made in our use of exercise books, writing paper, etc. We have actually seen some old-fashioned slates arriving in bundles at school, though we have not yet heard of their being used. From time to time interruptions have occurred, when the wailing of the siren has sent us with all speed to our shelters, but the periods of residence there have generally been short. Only once have we been below ground for a whole afternoon.

With reference to the *Record* no definite decision has been taken as to whether we shall publish two, instead of the usual three issues in the present school year. It depends upon a number of considerations. All that can be said at present is that, if one of the issues is dropped, it will be that of the Spring Term.

The school sends its greetings to all former scholars who are serving in any branch of the Forces. We publish a further list of these old scholars on another page, but we feel that our information is still far from complete. It will help us if anyone who knows of any Old Scholar whose name should be added to our list will send us details.

School Register.**VALETE.**

- *Butt, M. W. (VI), 1933-40.
- *Collins, G. T. (VI), 1934-40.
- *Horseman, D. J. (VI), 1934-40.
- *Horseman, P. R. (VI), 1934-40.
- *Horton, F. R. (VI), 1934-40.
- *Stone, R. M. (VI), 1929-40.
- *Walker, S. K. (VI), 1928-40.
- Bryan, B. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- Cowper, J. W. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- Devey, W. S. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- *Evans, E. M. (Upp. V), 1936-40.
- Heard, J. R. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- Johnson, A. E. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- *Miles, G. (Upp. V), 1937-40.
- Portman, E. H. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- Rimmer, D. (Upper V), 1935-40.
- Robinson, I. C. (Upp. V), 1935-40.
- *Sanders, C. E. (Upp. V), 1935-40.

* Prefect.

 SALVETE.

- Aalbregt, J. A. van K. (i).
- Baylis, M. J. (IIIA).
- Birtles, V. M. (Low. IV).
- Bomford, G. L. (IIIA).
- Booth, P. M. (i).
- Bridgman, D. E. (IIIA).
- Brown, P. C. (i).
- Carman, P. (Low. V).
- Caton, M. P. L. (i).
- Chatwin, R. G. R. (IIIA).
- Cheffins, M. A. (Upp. V).
- Clark, F. (IIIB).
- Devey, C. J. (IIIB).
- Dixon, R. E. (IIIB).
- Elmes, V. J. (IIIA).
- Ewins, L. (Upp. IV).
- Farquhar, C. (IIIA).
- Fisher, M. J. (i).
- Ganderton, W. M. (IIIB).
- Gantner, T. H. (IIIA).
- Gray, E. G. (IIIB).
- Grigg, J. A. (i).
- Grigg, M. R. (i).
- Grigg, P. A. (i).
- Grigg, P. R. (Rem.).
- Hartwell, K. H. (Low. IV).
- Higgs, A. R. N. (i).
- Higgs, J. G. E. (IIIA)
- Higgs, W. S. (IIIA).
- Hill, A. G. (Rem.).
- Hill, B. S. (Rem.).
- Hill, G. E. (Rem.).
- Hill, R. (IIIB).
- Hitchings, W. (i).
- Horseman, R. J. (IIIB).
- Horton, R. A. (IIIA).
- Howie, I. B. (Low. IV).
- Hull, N. R. (IIIB).
- James, E. R. (IIIB).
- Johnson, L. R. (IIIA).
- King, C. S. (Rem.).
- Malin, E. M. (IIIA).
- Malin, H. M. (Rem.).
- Mc Carthy, W. P. (IIIB).
- Meadows, E. I. (IIIA).
- Megainey, J. E. (IIIA).
- Montgomery, A. J. (i).
- Montgomery, A. M. (Rem.).
- Oakley, F. D. (IIIA).
- Paddock, J. M. (IIIB).
- Parriss, A. M. (Low. IV).
- Partridge, A. J. (IIIB).
- Partridge, G. T. (Rem.).
- Pearce, A. M. (IIIB).
- Peeler, J. M. (VI).
- Peeler, S. M. (Upp. V).
- Randall, R. (IIIA).
- Reynolds, V. A. (IIIA).
- Sharp, V. J. (Rem.).
- Sheppard, R. W. (Upp. V).
- Stallard, B. M. (Low. V).
- Stallard, S. M. (IIIA).
- Steele, J. N. (IIIA).
- Stone, V. E. (IIIB).
- Thomas, R. A. W. (i).
- Thompson, S. A. (i).
- Underhill, G. C. (IIIA).
- Williams, B. F. (Rem.).
- Wood, D. W. (IIIB).
- Woolley, S. D. (IIIA).
- Woolnough, H. (Upp. IV).

There have been 248 pupils in attendance this term

Old Scholars' Guild News.

PRESIDENT—MR. C. T. L. CATON.

HON. SEC.—R. B. BIDDLE. HON. TREAS.—W. G. HUNT.

The Summer Reunion was held at school on Saturday, July 27th. Unfortunately, after many weeks of really fine weather Jupiter Pluvius had to choose the twenty-seventh as the day on which to make up for lost time. The cricket match and the tennis tournament started well on time in fine weather, but by half past three the skies had darkened, and at four o'clock torrential rain threatened to wipe all outside activity from the programme. Accordingly, an early buffet tea was partaken of, during which it was hoped that the rain might give over. But this was not to be so ; and although the cricketers managed to arrive at a definite result, the tennis was "washed out." By six o'clock the committee decided to call the day off, and it was decided to bring the Reunion to a close with the ending of the cricket match.

And so, at seven o'clock, those present prepared to leave, the arrangement of a postponement being left in the hands of the committee. Other Old Scholars, however, began to arrive and we were left with the unenviable task of rearranging a programme and meal. At such short notice any attempt was doomed to failure. However, the attempt was made, and about sixty Old Scholars sat down to an improvised meal of biscuits, sandwiches and lemonade at nine o'clock. The business meeting was conducted during this period. The proposition that all officers should retain their positions for the "duration" was unanimously agreed to, and the question of a memorial to the late Miss Deans was deferred until the Christmas Reunion, at which, it was hoped, more members would be present.

During the evening, which was spent principally in dancing to music from a radiogram, kindly provided by Diana Hunt, and the usual "reunions" in the Lounge, a collection was made for Old Scholars serving in His Majesty's Armed Forces. A very gratifying sum of £1 6s. 0d. was raised and the committee hope to be able to send a small parcel at Christmas to each Old Scholar serving.

The Reunion ended at black-out time, about ten o'clock, and the party broke up in spirits which, considering the circumstances, were very commendable in all concerned.

The Christmas Reunion will be held at school on Saturday, December 21st, commencing at half past seven prompt. The school is being effectively blacked-out, and the Alauna Band has been engaged for the dancing. A short entertainment is being planned, and the evening meal, always one of the main events of the evening, will definitely be of a more satisfying nature than that in the summer. Opportunity to play darts and table tennis will be provided, and there will be the usual Lounge for those very welcome private reunions. The meeting will close at midnight.

The annual football match with the school has been arranged for Saturday, December 14th, with the kick-off at 2.30 prompt.

Ties, squares and scarves, for which the demand this term has been very light, are now very hard to procure. The price also has risen approximately fifty per cent., and it is intended to bring this matter before the Christmas Reunion.

The question of a Memorial Fund to the memory of the late Miss Deans will again be brought forward at the Reunion, and it is hoped that something definite will then be arranged. Some subscriptions have already been received, and any further ones should be sent to either the secretary, at The Priory, Alcester, or the treasurer, at Mosside, Alcester.

Finally, a very cordial invitation is sent to all Old Scholars, old and new, for the forthcoming Reunion. With postal arrangements as they are, this notice, as last year, will be the only official invitation, and it is again hoped that those Old Scholars who are subscribers to the *Record* will endeavour to communicate the date to all their friends who are not.

We regret to announce that there will be no "New Year's Dance" on December 31st this year. For many years now this event has been the most popular of all our functions ; but no one, we feel sure, will resent the preference given to such a worthy cause as the Red Cross. It is intended to run an Old Scholars' Dance later, but the actual date cannot yet be made known.

Kathleen Smallwood (nee Perks) is now back in New Zealand after a visit to England. In a letter giving some details of her voyage back she remarks what a pleasure it was, on reaching the American continent, to spend a few evening hours in fully lighted

streets. Yet even now in New Zealand, she says, such a habit does the blackout become, wherever she sees an unscreened light at night, she immediately wants to put it out.

It is with regret that we announce below the death of Mary Roberts, as the result of injuries received in an air raid.

Births.

On September 8th to Mr. and Mrs. M. P. C. Hordern (nee Blanche Spencer)—a daughter.

On September 28th, to Mr. and Mrs. C. A. J. White—a daughter.

On October 3rd, to Mr. and Mrs. H. Pinfield—a daughter.

Marriages.

On July 14th, at Rubery, Thomas Raymond Etheridge to Kathleen Mary Olive Sylvester (scholar 1925-32).

On July 18th, at Bidford-on-Avon, Herbert Richard May to Norah Holder (scholar 1921-30).

On July 22nd, at Weston-super-Mare, Kenneth Lamphier Clark to Rosalind Vivien Wright (scholar 1926-31).

On August 8th, at Studley, John Edward Chambers (scholar 1927-33) to Hilda Magaret Chatterley (scholar 1927-32).

On August 10th, at Bidford-on-Avon, George Millar Kinloch to Betty Oliver (scholar 1928-32).

On August 21st, at Walton, Cardiff, Kenneth Llewellyn Spence to Joyce Mary Blakeman (scholar 1927-29).

On September 23rd, at Redditch, Seymour John Ledbury (scholar 1930-34) to Winifred Mary Harris.

On September 28th, at Evesham, G. Colin Luker (scholar 1928-36) to Peggy Righton.

On October 26th, at Alstone, Beckford, George William Jones to Patricia Mason Inns (scholar 1923-32).

On October 26th, at Studley, Charles Raymond Kilby (scholar 1928-32) to L. M. Hawker.

Death.

On November 23rd, Anne Mary Roberts (scholar 1933-37), aged 19 years.

With the Colours.

The following names must be added to the three previous lists of Old Scholars and Staff serving in His Majesty's Forces :—

Staff :

S. F. Bates, Capt., Royal Warwickshire Regt.
 J. M. Cameron, Royal Corps of Signals.
 L. T. Jackson, Field Security Wing.

Old Scholars :

K. B. Ll Bailey, R.A.O.C.
 C. H. Baylis, Cadet, R.A.S.C.
 J. H. Bryan, R.A.F.
 F. Bunting, Royal Corps of Signals.
 M. E. Clemson, W.A.A.F.
 G. H. Davis, R.A.F.
 G. H. Figures, R.A.F. (Volunteer Reserve).
 W. H. Foster, R.A.O.C.
 R. H. Gaydon, Royal Corps of Signals.
 H. J. Hill.
 C. R. Kilby, R.A.F.
 C. M. Naylor, W.A.A.F.
 H. G. Orme, Sapper, R.E.
 W. Parker, R.N.
 E. F. Plevin, Royal Tank Corps.
 D. E. G. Richards, Royal Tank Corps
 W. E. Sherwood, R.A.P.C.
 P. H. Sherwood, R.N.
 F. H. Sisam, R.N.
 A. F. Taylor, R.A.F.
 J. Tombs, Royal Corps of Signals.
 M. J. Woodward, W.A.A.F.

The "Good Old Days."

Much as our venerable aunts may enthusiastically recall them, they seldom advocate a complete reversal to "the good old days." No, the inference is, that for all their praise of the Elizabethan era, they would be loth to exchange their comfortable bed for a rush mattress such as Shakespeare stretched his limbs on. To those who give lengthy dissertations on the ideal life in Norman times, we would say "What of the obstreperous barons?" Apart from the latter we imagine that the curfew must have been an annoyance.

But war has jolted us from dreams of those dim, distant days, into stark reality. Of a sudden we were plunged into an existence fraught with perils never before experienced. From living a life of comparative ease, we were forced to lead a "sheltered" existence. Once we toyed with the idea of lamps, now we are forced to accept it; and what curfew could be more stringent than the black-out? We may in all truth admit that shelters have come into fashion again, though they have ceased to protect the windows from the weather and function now to protect us from the windows!

Long past are the days when Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn rode on the Thames in the gaily-decorated royal barge; but did we not see the other day that a "water-bus" has been introduced by the London Passenger Transport Board? But we can go still further back in history to the early Christians who spent the greater part of their lives in catacombs. Now that the recital of their hardships has ceased, may we remark that we suffer quite as much as they. The only difference we can discover between the Christian refuge and the modern funk-hole is that catacombs had passages lined with dead: our shelters are lined with living. Let us hope that that somewhat gruesome remark has not caused our readers to throw down their magazines in despair.

Certainly, that temptation to argue has survived the test of time. When awakened in a shelter by the various noises which accompany an air-raid, a solid fit of exasperation settles upon us, and we proceed to air our grievances against the Government. When that has been concluded, we must perforce find excuses for our victims, and build ourselves up once more into a state of beatific contentment. We remark in passing, that the right to grumble has ever been exercised by the British people.

In case the reader is not yet convinced that the good old days have returned with a vengeance, let us cap these observations with a passage from "Hamlet."

“ Good, now sit down, and tell me, he that knows
 Why this same strict and most observant watch
 So nightly toils the subject of the land ;
 And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,
 And foreign mart for implements of war ;
 Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
 Does not divide the Sunday from the week.”

Truly, there is nothing new in the world !

M. AUSTIN, J. PEELER (Form VI.).

A Rational Poem.

O, thou most valuable of all possessions !
 Thou cursed blessing of the humankind !
 Why must thou, O most unobtrusive booklet,
 Be even constant in the human mind ?
 Why must mankind be ever loth to lose thee,
 Thou who deprived them of small luxuries ?
 Why must they ever want to keep thee near them,
 Reminding them of joys that they dismiss ?
 Is it because thou art so fair to look at ;
 Or because thou art contrived for lasting fame ?
 Nay, for thou’rt unbecomingly benumbed,
 And later, mankind will forget thy name.
 But for butter, sugar, bacon, meat and tea,
 O, Booklet of Ration Coupons, they need thee.

JOAN.

Is Idleness Necessarily a Vice ?

Idle people seem to get more than their fair share of blame and chastisement. The whole world frowns on them, regards them with mixed indifference and scorn, and some im in the case of a true, thorough, notorious idler, with awe and astonishment, at his skill in avoiding toil. Society has dubbed them with names, each more scathing than the last, which pursue them wherever they go ; they generally have an unshakeable reputation for incompetence, inefficiency, irresponsibility and all the other dreadful faults which accompany idleness. Never were there more slandered humans than the disciples of the doctrine of “ Peace, everlasting Peace,” and never were there any who cared less.

Idleness cannot be acquired ; it is an inborn characteristic. Lazy people are born, not made; certainly they must be encouraged at an early stage to become proficient, and that is why so many only show symptoms of the disease from time to time,

because their parents or some other Power, have crushed it somewhat. But in others it has flourished, grown and developed in favourable conditions. These idlers are masters of the art, and put all their energy into the task of avoiding any labour which comes their way; their skill can be quite astonishing.

They only provoke displeasure when their idleness means trouble for someone else; it is true that this is more often the case than not; by shifting all their responsibilities on to other people, they bring upon themselves endless trials. For who would not be furious with anger, at seeing someone 'taking it easy' while he worked and strove to accomplish a double task? No one but a saint. Yet idleness is ignored or merely despised, as long as it only harms the lazy one.

I do not believe it should be punished, because the offender cannot help it, any more than some people can help being busy-bodies, and always bustling about on some very important errand. The lazy person may try hard to overcome his weakness, but he will always be defeated, because idleness, once it has come, never goes. He will have to be 'Lazybones' all his life. So why try to check such an unavoidable fault?

Idleness cannot therefore be a vice; it does not come from habit, but it is there more or less from birth to death; it seems harmful only to the selfish, and can idlers help it if nearly all their fellows are selfish? In other respects it is inoffensive, peaceful, and sometimes even amusing to look upon (the face of a tardy riser, rueful at the thought of getting up, is an entertaining sight). It does not lie in the power of man to convert a lazy person to a conscientious one. The only thing to do is to regard it, if not with approval, at least with tolerance, as one of the necessary evils of human nature. Moreover, consider the lilies of the field . . .

P. ALLEN (Upper V.).

The Silver Pagoda.

Chiang-Tso and his wife, Loy-Wung, lived in a tiny house in a quiet street in China. Chiang-Tso's family had once been rich, but now only a few heirlooms were left from what had once been a vast number of priceless treasures. The most prized of these was a tiny silver ornament in the shape of a pagoda. The care and skill with which every minute detail was executed had to be seen to be believed.

At this time the struggle with Japan was at its worst. The Chinese government were appealing for valuables of all sorts to help the war effort. Chiang-Tso and Loy Wung had given everything except the silver pagoda. One morning they made the decision that this also must be sacrificed for their beloved land. That morning Chiang-Tso set out with the silver pagoda in his pocket.

The sun was setting, and Loy-Wung waited impatiently for her husband's return. The boy who brought the vegetables had told her that the Japanese aeroplanes had been again ruthlessly showering the streets of the neighbouring town, where Chiang-Tso was employed, with their deadly machine-gun bullets. Suddenly someone knocked on the door. It was one of her husband's friends. He had come to report that Chiang-Tso had been injured by the machine-guns, and taken to hospital. How badly, he could not tell. Loy-Wung ran from the house, her head swimming, in the direction of the next town.

Chiang-Tso was recovering consciousness. Loy-Wung knelt by his bed. At first he did not speak, but he pressed into her hand something heavy. It was the silver pagoda. Altered, to be sure, for it was now an almost shapeless lump of metal, and embedded in the centre was a machine gun bullet. Chiang-Tso then spoke. "Fate has decided that the silver pagoda shall stay with us, Loy-Wung."

J. PLESTERS (Lower V.).

Hang up a Rainbow.

You must hang up a rainbow
When things go awry,
And not let black clouds darken
All of your sky.

It is easily fashioned—
Just a smile and a song,
The best kind of rainbow
When all things go wrong.

Don't let life's puddles
Splash mud in your eye,
For there's room for a rainbow
In everyone's sky.

C. A. STANLEY (Form VI.).

A November Day.

Suddenly, every year, I wake up on one November morning and think, "Winter's here." I hardly know whether I realise this with joy or regret, for there is the festive season to look forward to, and yet all those dreary days till Spring comes.

For the first time for months there are fern patterns of ice all over the windows. The watery sun appears in the West after a herald of crimson, and smiles weakly on the frost below. A sharp wind blows, bending the already leafless trees, and a small bird has some difficulty in keeping his balance on a bare and swaying twig.

There flashes through my mind the old saying "It's nice to get up in the morning, but it's nicer to stay in bed!" I put one hand out and hastily pull it under the clothes again, promising myself two more minutes of heaven. However, the thought that I have eventually to get out spoils the whole thing, and I am no better off at the end of the two minutes than I was before. I gaze out of the window for a few seconds more, then hearing the clock strike, I screw up my courage and make one wild leap out of bed. With my teeth chattering in my head, and my limbs shaking like a jelly, I make the horrible discovery that the water is frozen. After a little consideration I again take the plunge, and emerge a short time afterwards glowing and triumphant. I then shrug my way into my clothes, and after a hurried breakfast, rush out just in time to catch the school 'bus.

All the way along the road, roadmen are employed in alternately sprinkling sand on the slippery patches, and in breathing on their hands. The hedges are covered with frosty cobwebs, and one wonders wherever they all come from. Even the brown ploughed land is crusted with white, and the tops of the trees appear out of the mist like ghostly ships on a grey ocean. The windows of the car need continual rubbing to keep the moist air off them, and the younger members of the party find unending amusement in tracing on the windows flattery faces of their companions. At last we arrive at school, and all our friends greet us with "Isn't it beastly cold!"

Between lessons there is a general rush for the hot-water pipes, and by the end of the afternoon many have discovered from the persistent itchings of fingers and toes, that they are in need of a little calcium. All day there is a great wrapping-round of blazers, and stamping of feet, while one's writing suffers from the fact that one's hands are blue with cold.

It is with enormous satisfaction that everyone shrugs on his cold coat and prepares for the journey home to the comfort of a fire and a hot cup of tea. After tea comes the black-out, and the louder howl of the wind round the chimney-pots. When bedtime comes I undress in the light of the frosty moon and creep sheepishly into bed with my hot-water bottle, trying to excuse myself by murmuring, "But it's been such a cold, wintry day to-day."

D. A. SAVAGE (Form VI.).

Notes and News.

Owing to the war, it was considered desirable that the school should not be closed for the ordinary long holiday at the end of the summer term. A holiday of a fortnight was taken, after which the school re-opened for three weeks, but the attendance of pupils was not made compulsory. At the end of this period there was a further week's holiday, following which the Autumn term started a week earlier than usual.

It was arranged that during the three weeks that school was open in August, the programme should consist partly of class-room activities outside the ordinary curriculum, though connected with it ; partly of outdoor activities ; and partly of the performance of useful jobs on the school premises. The very small average attendance of pupils made the carrying out of the first of these items an impossibility. But time was given each day to outdoor and indoor games, and some valuable work was done in straightening up certain untidy parts of the premises and in strengthening the many windows of the school, as a precaution against attack from the air.

On the whole it was felt that the experiment of opening school in August was a failure, as far as A.G.S. was concerned, as the very limited attendance of pupils showed that there was little demand from parents for such an arrangement.

The prefects this term are M. Compton (head girl), A. Aspinwall, M. Austin, P. Cresswell, C. Stanley, E. Champion, J. Hansell, D. Savage, Arnold i (head boy), Mahoney, Walton, Collins, Midlane, Webb.

The Sides captains are :— *Brownies* : A. Aspinwall and Mahoney ; *Jackals* : C. Stanley and Rippington ; *Tomtits* : D. Savage and Midlane.

Last term cricket caps were awarded to Booker, Ison and Portman i.

In the final of the Gold Medal competition D. Horseman beat M. Williams 6—3, 6—2.

At the closing assembly on July 26th the usual presentations were made. The cricket bats—the gifts of Mr. S. Stone and Mr. A. Baylis—were presented to Walton and Booker respectively; a pair of batting gloves (the gift of Mr. Jackson) to Collins i; the tennis racquet to P. Cresswell. Tennis colours were handed to D. Horseman and B. Dew; while D. Horseman as winner of the Tennis Gold Medal competition received two Savings Certificates in lieu of a gold medal.

Miss Evans has been appointed senior mistress in succession to the late Miss Deans.

Miss Powell, who joined the staff in 1937, left at the end of last term to take up an appointment at Blackburn. Her place has been filled by Miss J. E. Blackaby.

Towards the middle of July Mr. S. F. Bates joined the Forces. Miss C. E. Smye has been appointed to teach music during his absence.

Mr. L. T. Jackson also joined the Forces early in September. His work is being taken by Miss M. C. Mason, who joined us on October 14th. Until her appointment we had the assistance of Mr. V. D. Lipman, a University student.

On Monday, September 23rd, a lecture on India was given by Mr. R. Allen.

Dancing lessons have been arranged this term for Forms VI, Upper and Lower V, instruction being given by Miss Sylvia Atkinson.

Half term was October 25th, 28th and 29th.

As is the case in other parts of the county, the school air raid shelters are temporarily unusable, owing to the wet weather.

Congratulations to Phyllis Horseman on being awarded a bursary by St. Hugh's College, Oxford.

E. Champion has presented "The Viper of Milan" to the school library.

It is intended to hold Carol concerts as usual at the end of this term.

The following Old Scholars are at the Universities and Training Colleges this year:—*Oxford University* : L. Parsons, P. R. Horseman, M. W. Butt ; *Cambridge University* : S. K. Walker ; *London University* : M. J. Rowles, H. D. Hunt ; *Birmingham University* : R. E. W. Spencer, R. W. Spencer, R. M. Stone ; *Durham University* : P. A. Welsby ; *Leeds University* : P. H. Rutter ; *Lincoln Theological College* : D. S. Bailey ; *Gipsy Hill Training College* : D. J. Horseman ; *Saltley Training College* : G. T. Collins.

Scouts of the earlier days of the school troop will remember with gratitude the interest shown in their training by Mr. T. Lester, whose death took place on November 9th. He gave much help in the formation of the band, which continued in existence for several years.

Term ends on Thursday, December 19th.

On Tuesday, November 26th, a party of over a hundred and twenty boy evacuees with Staff, being part of King Henry VIII Grammar School, Coventry, arrived at Alcester to share the A.G.S. buildings. Owing to the very short notice of their arrival, detailed working arrangements could not be made in advance, our Staff being fully occupied in securing billets in the town for the evacuees. We extend a cordial welcome to our visitors, hoping that they will be comfortable with us, and find Alcester a peaceful retreat after their recent unpleasant experiences in Coventry.

A Knock at the Door.

On the outskirts of the lovely moors of Yorkshire, stand little groups of cottages, in half-dozens, or less. They are the shepherds' cottages, the houses of the men who used to keep their flocks on the moors. Of late years, these cottages have

become deserted and many have fallen into ruins, for people live in towns or villages these days, not in lonely places. But in a certain group of four cottages, there is a little one that is inhabited by an old widow and her two sons.

At the outbreak of the war, Bill, the eldest son, joined the Air Force, and John went into munitions. Old Mrs. Jones stayed on with John, living her usual uneventful life, quite content with John's company. No air raid warnings ever disturbed the peace of that quiet spot, for Sheffield's sirens were too far away to be heard, and all she knew of the war, was learnt from the daily papers.

The scene of this tale is the kitchen of Mrs. Jones' cottage, a cosy room, with a huge range at one end, in front of which lay a cheerful rug, with a wooden chair placed at one side of the fire. The room was quite dusk, save for the flickering fire which revealed in its doubtful light the shining furniture and the polished teapot, a relic of better days, standing on the solid old dresser. On the hob was a huge black, glistening kettle, singing merrily away, in time with the ticking of the grandfather clock.

Outside a great gale was blowing, the wind whistled round the house, making eerie noises, the rain beat upon the windows, and Mrs. Jones glanced anxiously up. Oh, how anxious she was. The door rattled in the wind, she started violently, then went to it, "Who's there?" she cried. The whistling wind was the only answer, and she went back to her seat by the fire. More than once she went to the window and peered gingerly through the side of the blackout; the deep darkness met her eyes. The clock ticked the minutes away, half past ten, eleven-o'clock, the kettle had been filled again, the fire made up, and she still sat in her chair, jumping at every sound.

At last she heard footsteps on the stone path outside. As they drew nearer she grew white with suppressed excitement. A merry "rat-a-tat" sounded on the door, and a cheerful voice sounded above the noise of the storm. "Any-one in? Mother. Mother!" With a choking sob she rushed to open the door, and fell into the arms of Bill, tall and handsome in his corporal's uniform. "Oh Bill," she gasped, "the storm, I thought you'd never come!" But Bill *had* come, to stay for his seven days' leave.

BETTY FRANCIS (Upper V.).

The Lilac Room.

As the sun shines down on the Lilac Room, the purple and mauve hangings give the room a soft summer atmosphere. The curtains that are draped round the bay windows cast soft shadows on to the pink satin curtains behind. At the end of the room there is a pink settee, and chairs to match. Over the pink fire place there is a row of purple ornaments. A grand piano with a purple covering stands in the corner, by the door that leads into an old-fashioned rose garden. The roses climb up the wall and peep in at the windows, and drop their delicate petals on to the pink and mauve carpet.

A small table stands in the middle of the carpet, with a vase of roses on top. The room has a cool atmosphere, compared with the scorching sun outside. A pink sun-blind stands out from the two bay windows, and pink basket chairs are placed in their shade.

As the sun sinks down, deep purple shadows fall across the room, the chairs change from pink to mauve, the settee disappears into a shadow, the mauve cushions change to black and soon the room is dark and still. And the moon shines down, and smiles happily on the lilac room.

N. DALES (Upper IV.).

War Time in London.

Gone are the lights of Piccadilly,
 Marble Arch and Leicester Square;
 The streets are left so dark and chilly
 Without their usual cheerful glare.
 The pleasure-seekers have forsaken
 Their usual haunts, and they are found,
 Not merry-making, but have taken
 Shelter in the Underground.

London's people bravely fight
 To keep the Empire's heart intact.
 They know that they are in the right
 And Hitler's power will soon be cracked.
 These times will pass with their sorrow and pain,
 The end must come to every war,
 And London's light will shine again,
 Gayer and brighter than before.

J. BRIDGMAN (Upper V.).

Influenza Versus Bombs.

It was at twenty minutes to two on the afternoon of October 31st. that the siren wailed its warning note. The weather was atrocious, and the rain descended in a steady pour. We entered the cloak-rooms in an orderly fashion, donned mackintoshes and gas-masks and proceeded to make our way towards the air-raid shelters.

We made ourselves as comfortable as was possible in the limited space, and started to sing heartily. Towards three o'clock, the voice of one of our choristers was suddenly still, because a large drop of rain had descended from the roof down his neck. He shrieked, but was summarily told to shut up, and we continued our singing. Then another drop of rain fell with a sickening splash on to another boy's head; then another. We pulled our coat collars about our ears and tried to look and feel, cheerful. But our feelings were sorely damped when the lantern which up to now had watched over us, was taken up to the other end of the shelter. After expressing our opinion of the wretched lantern snatcher, we settled down again, in the pitch-like, dripping, darkness.

The time rolled on. We were by now thoroughly sick of the situation. We were eventually granted release, as we were conducted out of the shelters before the "all-clear" sounded.

I write these few lines in protest to the Warwickshire County Council. This is how pupils of Alcester Grammar School have taken shelter from the possible danger of falling bombs. It is only evident that we have not taken shelter, but discarded it. Anyone can see that the dangers of congregating in a confined damp space are limitless. I do not assume that air raid shelters as a whole are valueless and dangerous. But we must agree that, at the moment at any rate, the shelters we have at school are not of the best. The fact stares us in the face that a shelter which will not stop the rain, cannot possibly arrest the progress of hurtling missiles.

It was with this thought in view, together with the outnum-bering dangers of influenza to those of bombs, that I wrote this article on Influenza versus Bombs.

D. E. W. SPENCER (Upper V.).

Olla Podrida

In "Oliver Twist," says M. C., the boys were forced to eat brimstone and treacle, and Oliver was so hungry that he asked for more.

My father stood, writes K. M. W., with his legs akimbo.

Please, sir, shall we use pure or distilled water? asked R. G. W.

"David Copperfield," according to R. H. A., is the author's autobiography, but it is interesting in being not only a picture of what he was, but what he could not be, but would like to have been.

Shall we dissolve the water? inquires C. A. S.

I Fly A Bomber Plane

It was a rough night and I had had a big supper. There was a roasting fire in the grate and I felt so drowsy that I could hardly climb the stairs to go to bed. The fresh air through the open window just kept me awake to undress. I went straight off to sleep.

The next thing I knew I was in a large staff room in a R.A.F. bomber station. There were several more men with me. We were having instructions given us as to where we were to bomb that night. We soon put on our big coats and caps. Outside the sharp sleety rain cut into our faces. It was a night! We were soon in our machines and ready to take off. Then came the great moment. The propeller was turned, I pressed the lever and off we went. We made a perfect ascent. We circled round a few times, put out our navigation lights and made off for Berlin. We put the navigation lights on as we neared the coast so that the guns would not fire at us. We were not long in getting over the North Sea, and over Holland and Belgium. In every town we passed we could distinguish the houses because the black-outs were not fixed properly.

At last we got to Berlin. Their black-out was terrible, with great chinks of light all about. We dropped three flares and found our objective, the gas works. I was so weary and cold that I wished I was in bed at home. I was now looking at a number of small buttons. How could they expect me to know which one to press. I pressed one of them. There came the sound of machine gun bullets. Through the earphones I heard a

voice shout, "Press the next button, you blunderhead." I pressed it. A short silence; then boom!!! boom!!! Two bombs had exploded. Then a great sheet of fire lit the sky for a minute. We had hit the gas works. Then, oh dear me! didn't we have a fine show of anti-aircraft fire!

That is all I remember, because at that moment I fell out of bed and woke up. No more big suppers for me.

BRYAN (Lower V.).

An Alphabet of the War.

Attend carefully to your black-out,
Be watchful to your lights,
Consider well—have you your gas-mask?
Don't forget your 'dentity card,
Enjoy yourself the best you can,
Fighting always like good soldiers.
Give up your luxuries willingly,
Heart always bright and cheerful too,
In this great struggle for freedom.
Join in the throng of knitters, girls.
Keep your paper, bones and cardboard,
Lend your savings to the nation,
Make your old clothes do again,
None of these have you need to waste.
Out of your friends there are farmers,
Pigs they may have which must be fed,
Quantities of waste they can use.
Read carefully leaflets sent you.
Save your bags and empty cartons,
To the retailer return them.
Use rationed foods most carefully,
Very little of these there are.
Win the war by just a little
Extra care and economy:
You can help as much as soldiers!
Z brings us therefore to the end,
And tells us all to "Keep at it!"

E.A.A.

Hats.

Hats have always been a passion,
To ladies who admire a fashion.
Some are only bits of straw,
They really have no shape at all.
Others really look quite trim
With their ribbons on the brim.

There are lots of dazzling shades,
To suit the ladies and young maids.
Some for boys, and some for girls,
They look sweet where there are curls.
Little babies look so neat,
In their bonnets, oh, so sweet!

W. ARCHER (Upper IV.).

The "Alert"

The old High Street was deserted, all the lights were blacked out, and only a crack of light was showing here and there as doors were opened and quickly closed again. It was a full moon and I could see to read a newspaper. The bats were flying blindly around the house tops and chimneys. Here and there I could hear the sound of talking and laughing as I occasionally passed a public house. As I walked slowly on along the dark, mysterious and deserted High Street, a dark object passed in front of me, nearly touching me. I was not much alarmed when I found it was only the night policeman on his beat, so I continued on my journey keeping clear of dark objects.

I was nearing the old church when its ancient clock struck nine; the noise of the old clock had scarcely died away when the sirens sounded the "Alert" and then the change took place. The old High Street came to life again for there was the opening and shutting of doors and out of the houses came steel helmeted men of all shapes and sizes. Some were standing looking up into the sky, while others were making their way to their respective places, some on foot and others on bicycles. But when the wailing of the sirens had died away all the rush and bustle had gone and all that remained was a few wardens who were talking to each other. So I made my way home.

H. H. KNIGHT (Lower IV).

The Old Man of the Sea
A BALLAD

There was an old man who had sailed the sea,
He had sailed the world all round ;
His three sons they were all dead,
At sea they had all been drowned.

He searched for them in the wide, wide world,
But he searched for them in vain ;
One day he went to meet them,
For he never reached home again.

They mourned for him in England,
They mourned for him in Rome,
They mourned for him in the wide, wide world,
They mourned for him at home.

WENDY HOWES (IIIB).

"Cries in the Night."

Peace reigned over the dark city as I returned home from working late at my office. I walked along the maze of streets until I came to the one in which my house was situated. I walked up to the front door, and after having waved a cheery good night to a constable on his usual beat I entered. When I visited my dining room to have my usual supper, I was met by a cold draught of air coming from the chimney. But I soon made a good fire and my cheerfulness was restored, and I sat down to my meal. After I had finished this I took a short rest before going to bed. When the time came for me to go, I went up the creaking stairs cautiously, glancing nervously around, for I did not disbelieve the stories about ghosts. I entered my bedroom quickly, switched on the light, observing that all was in order, and with haste I undressed and got into bed. After switching off the light I began to roll about underneath the bedclothes in an effort to keep myself warm. I finally succeeded and I dropped off to sleep, little dreaming of the adventures that were in store for me.

I was suddenly awakened by the deep tone of the church clock, which was mingled with the most dreaded of all night cries "fire ! fire !" Could it be possible that there was a fire in the city or was I imagining it ? However, my doubts soon disappeared when a furious hammering began at my door. I ran and opened it and found in front of me the same policeman whom I had spoken to in the evening. He told me there was a fire in the street and that everybody was being evacuated to a safer zone. I came out of the house in a very bad temper, but I soon forgot about it, when I perceived the commotion in the street. From one end to the other the street was crammed with fire engines and ambulances, while the firemen were energetically spraying water into five large houses which had caught fire. After succeeding in following the policeman who was zig-zagging his way through the fire engines I came to a large crowd of people who were waiting for several 'buses to take them from the danger area. Soon the 'buses arrived and I joined the crowd fighting for seats. The vehicles soon departed and I was left to think of what would happen on this night when cries were heard.

R. SHEPPARD (Upper V.).

Green Bombs.

One night I was sitting with my mother and my two sisters in the dining-room. We had some visitors in the house, but they had gone to bed. Their bed-room was over the dining-room. At the time there was an air-raid on, and as we sat round the fire we were listening to an enemy plane that was going over.

Suddenly! there was a loud bang, the windows rattled, the door shook and we all made a dash for the cellar. After we had been in the cellar for a few minutes and had got over the shock, mother went up-stairs to see that our visitors were all right. Mrs. Green came out to meet mother. Mother asked her if she had heard any bombs. At this Mrs. Green laughed and said, "They were not bombs, but I fell off the bed."

JOAN VALE (Lower IV.).

A Perilous Journey.

Dick Brent was to be sent from London to New York as an evacuee. On his last night at home he went to bed dreaming of the morrow when he was to go to Southampton. There for two days he remained with two hundred other evacuees waiting for their ship. Then they went on board, some crying, some laughing. They had said good bye to their parents and now saw the last of them for the duration of the war. Dick soon made friends with two other evacuees, Timmy and Roger Scott from Glasgow. The ship remained in port until nightfall, then, with three escorting destroyers, sailed out to sea. In the next three days Dick, Timmy and Roger had a grand time. Then it happened.

That night there was a very thick fog and gradually the escorting destroyers separated. Slowly a German U-boat slid to the surface and silently followed the ship. The children slept on unsuspectingly, then boom! the ship was hit. There was panic on board, the ship listed to port, the lifeboats were lowered. A few slight casualties were caused, but that was all. For two days the children, sailors and nurses were packed in these open boats. A U.S.A. torpedo boat at length sighted them and three hours later other vessels picked them up and landed them. Those rescued children would find it hard to forget that voyage.

LEWIS (Upper IV.).

An Adventure in the Blackout.

A most terrifying and alarming experience happened to us in the Spring of this year, which, for my part I do not wish to go through again. My father had taken my mother, brother, sister, myself and the dog to see some friends. As we were returning a violent storm started. The thunder rolled and the lightning flashed so vividly that at times it was as brilliant as sunshine. The rain came down in torrents and it was only a few moments ere the road was like a river, but the car managed to keep going. Darkness was coming on fast and we were still several miles from home, when following a heavy gust of rain the car stopped. We did seem in a fix for it rained so heavily that it was impossible to see what was the cause of the trouble. The thunder and the lightning kept on, and I must admit that I was beginning to feel frightened.

After we had been in this stranded position for about half an hour, another car pulled up in front of us, and during a slight break in the storm Dad went and asked the driver if he could take us into Alcester. He kindly said he would do when the storm eased a little admitting that he was somewhat scared at carrying on in so much thunder. At last the rain eased up, and we started away with our new found friend in his car, leaving Dad, who said he could fix things and come on later. Imagine our surprise when when we neared Haselot Turn, and found very deep water all over the road. There were several more cars parked about ; some had come through and others, like us were waiting to reach Alcester. After we had waited for some time, the water looked to be going down and we started to go through it.

We had gone about as far as Oversley, the water swishing along the running board ; then we suddenly stopped and the water began to rise in the car. It rose higher and higher and at last we had to stand on the seats. We were in a terrible fix, for it was pitch black ; we could not see a thing, nor could we put on the light inside the car.

For nearly two hours we sat cramped up on the seats, but at last the water leaked out of the car and we decided to try and get through. So with the water trying to push us back and cars all over the place, we at last managed to get out of the water, but to our distress the car again stopped. We did all we could to try and make it go but without luck ; so we pushed it into the side of the road and then tried to keep warm. After some time a lorry driver offered to help us out, but on examination he found that the petrol tank was full of water ; but he kindly

offered to take us home. Can you imagine anything worse to happen than four of us, the dog the driver and his mate, all crammed in the cab of a lorry? But just as we were starting Dad came along in our car. He had waited until the rain had stopped and the water gone down before he attempted to get home. When we reached home we had some hot drinks and were none the worse next morning after a most terrifying and thrilling adventure in the black-out.

GIAN BEACHUS (Lower IV.).

A Prime Minister.

A small boy's definition.

As I scanned the newspaper on Monday morning, November 11th, I came across the report of Mr. Chamberlain's death. After I had read and commented on this my brother aged six, who had been listening, suddenly remarked :— " Mithter Chamberlain ! does you mean the man Mithter Chamberlain, who used to be the Captain of our Gang ?" This quaint expression provided me with a hearty laugh.

INGRAM (Upper IV.).

Oxford Examinations, 1940.

The following candidates were successful in the examinations held in July :

Higher School Certificate :

Group 2 (Modern Studies)—P. R. Horseman.

Group 3 (Mathematics and Science)—G. T. Collins.

School Certificate :

*E. A. Aspinwall (6 credits), *W. M. Austin (8 credits), B. Bryan (2 credits), *E. M. Champion (5 credits), *A. D. Collins (7 credits), P. M. Cresswell (7 credits), *W. S. Devey (6 credits), *E. M. Evans (7 credits), *V. J. Hansell (7 credits), J. R. Heard (2 credits), *J. M. Hill (8 credits), A. E. Johnson (5 credits), G. Miles (2 credits), J. R. Midlane (4 credits), *E. H. Portman (5 credits), *J. E. Reynolds (8 credits), *I. C. Robinson (8 credits), *D. A. Savage (8 credits), *C. E. Sanders (8 credits), C. A. Stanley (3 credits), *J. Taylor (7 credits), *R. G. Webb (7 credits), *M. D. Wells (7 credits), M. Williams (4 credits), *G. M. Wilson (6 credits), *M. R. Winwood (8 credits).

* Qualified to claim exemption from London Matriculation Examination.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE
JOINT BOARD EXAMINATIONS, 1940.

Higher School Certificate :

Mathematics and Science—R. J. Walton.

National Savings.

In response to Sir Kingsley Wood's appeal, a special effort has been made to increase the membership of the groups and their savings. On November 15th the membership of the boys' group was 65, a percentage of 60, and of the girls' group 95, a percentage of 70. The amount of savings, since February 1940, was £340, of which the boys had saved £90, and the girls £250. This total has shown a considerable increase since last term, but not a sufficiently great one for the present situation. It is hoped that non-members will consider the matter carefully, and that very soon membership will rise to 90 per cent. It is also hoped that the £500, the total aimed at for February 1941, will be far exceeded.

The following points in connection with savings cannot be too strongly stressed :—

1. That savings should be brought regularly, and not forgotten.
2. That the small saver is just as welcome as the large saver. Even if it takes two months to save for a sixpenny stamp, pupils should still join.
3. That those who possess the maximum number (500) of National Savings Certificates should certainly continue to save. A Post Office account can be opened or Defence Bonds bought, through the school groups.
4. That those who are still members of a group at a previous school should transfer to one at their present school.

Mr. Compton has succeeded Mr. Jackson as Hon. Secretary of the boys' group ; Miss Weatherup is still Hon. Secretary of the girls' group.

Finally, it is abundantly evident that members lend cheerfully and exercise self-denial. The buying of a birthday gift is often postponed till after the war, the money meanwhile being lent to the government.

Scouts.

SCOUTMASTER—MR. E. S. WALKER.

This term the troop has been greatly enlarged, the number now being over seventy. At the beginning of the term an alteration was made in reducing the number of patrols to seven.

The senior Scouts—those who are Cadets—now meet once a month. This arrangement allows more time to be spent on the junior Scouts, and already considerable progress has been made. Many Scouts who joined the troop this term have succeeded in passing their tenderfoot test and are well on their way to their second class. The troop is fortunate in having two King Scouts, who are a great help and encouragement to the remainder.

W. J. M.

The Cadet Corps.

Parades have been held regularly twice a week throughout the term, the time being devoted to either drill or lectures. The strength of the corps has now risen to thirty-five. Much difficulty has been encountered in securing equipment, and the parading in uniform has not been possible on account of the lack of certain essential parts. It is hoped, however, that these will soon be received.

Two rifles have been obtained for the Corps, so that shooting practice may be given.

Football.

Captain.—WEBB.

As in previous years the team has been seriously handicapped through the loss of many of last season's members, but in spite of a very small team we have made quite a successful beginning. Great dash and keenness has been shown by the younger members of the team, and I think as the season progresses we shall win more matches when experience is gained by the new members. The defence has been exceptionally steady, but the forwards, although combining well, failed to take their opportunities in front of goal.

We started with a victory over Evesham, which was gained after a very hard struggle by a margin of three goals, the score being six goals to three. The following Saturday the school

narrowly lost at home to Bromsgrove. During the match the siren sounded ; after the "All Clear" the team returned to the field and at once attacked the visitors' goal with great tenacity, but were unable to force a draw. In the match with Redditch the team were much smaller and consequently suffered rather heavily against a very superior team. The match with King's Norton had to be postponed owing to the state of the pitch, but it is hoped that another fixture can be arranged at a later date.

The following have represented the school :—Mahoney, Walton, Bryan, Midlane, Webb, Collins, Hunt i, Rippington, Lucas, Houghton, Goode, Collett and Arnold ii.

RESULTS :

A.G.S. v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home), won, 6—3.
" Bromsgrove C. H. S. (home), lost, 3—5.
" Redditch C. H. S. (home), lost, 0—8.
" Redditch C. H. S. (away), lost, 1—5.

Sides match—Tomtits 8, Brownies 1.

R. G. W.

Hockey.**CAPTAIN—P. CRESSWELL.**

There has been some improvement in the hockey this season as a result of much appreciated coaching from Miss Phillips. There is a keenness in the middle school, but a lack of interest in older members might be altered.

All sides matches are being postponed until next term when it is hoped the play will be better than is usual. Of school matches played this term the results are :—

A. G. S. v. Redditch C. H. S. (home), won, 4—3.
" Bromsgrove C. H. S. (home), lost, 0—7.

P. M. C.

Cricket, 1940.

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost
10	6	2	2

The following boys represented the school in First XI matches: Collins i, Butt, Walton, Horton, Booker, Portman i, Devey, Ison, Webb, Mahoney, Collins ii, Midlane, Yapp.

For the Juniors.**Lords and Ladies.**

The cuckoo pint is tall and slim,
Round it dance fairies neat and trim ;
The lords and ladies watch them all,
As they dance at the fairy ball.

All the night they dance until
The sound of the gong and all is still ;
Then suddenly up again they spring
And start once more to dance and sing.

ANN MCKEwan (Remove).

Autobiography of a Dog.

I lived with my mother until I was three months old. Then I was bought by a lady who took great care of me. She washed me every day and combed and brushed me. To eat I was given biscuits with milk poured over them, and it was very good. At night I slept in a chair with a nice rug in it. When my mistress got up in the morning she took me for a walk and afterwards I had my breakfast. My mistress had a kitten with which I played. The kitten's mother was not so nice ; she grumbled and spat at me. After breakfast I ran about and played until dinner time. For dinner I had some nice vegetables off my mistress's plate. For tea, biscuits and milk, and after I went for a run with my mistress. When we came home I got in my chair and went to sleep.

HILDA MALIN (Remove).

The Animals.

I was going a walk in the wood and I saw a hedgehog. He was burying himself in a pile of leaves in a ditch and he was grunting. In a tree there was a little bird. It was singing loudly and was hopping on a branch very happily. I was watching it. I had some sweets in my pocket and I ate one or two, and I had a sandwich as well, so I gave a little bit to the little bird. Then I heard a squeak ; it was a rabbit and it was being chased by a weazel, but suddenly a dog came and frightened away the weazel, and the rabbit ran down a burrow.

JOHN C. B. HUMPHRIES (Form I.).

ALCESTER:
THE CHRONICLE OFFICE,
HIGH STREET.
